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EDITED BY HENRY SUZZALLO

PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

CHANGING CONCEPTIONS OF EDUCATION

BY

ELLWOOD P. CUBBERLEY

PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION, LELAND STANFORD JUNIOR UNIVERSITY

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Experience and progress

THE proper means for reconstructing our social institutions are best suggested by a careful accumulation and analysis of our institutional experiences. In every work of political and social reform, we are more or less conscious of the past failures and successes of our instruments. But such consciousness is not altogether deliberate and thorough. With communities, as with individuals, much is forgotten or neglected; while other fragments of our past, emphasized beyond their true importance, influence us unduly. Thus many of our social advances are gained through a radicalism that has finally to be tempered by the work of the reactionary. Such progress, the product of conflict and partisanship, is costly. It arises out of an imperfect mode of bringing our experiences to bear upon our problems. In the reconstruction of states, schools, vocations, and other social instruments, we need a wider ac-

cumulation and a saner interpretation of the facts of our educational history.

Experience and school reform

The institution of education does not escape the full force of the principle suggested. Indeed, educational conditions are such in America today that one might be disposed to say that this principle has a special and peculiar applicability to the problem of school reform; at least, there is no institution where a rational use of institutional experience could effect more good.

A static view of education

We have among us those who have become keenly sensitive to the evils of the many changes in the methods of our schools. They have perhaps been over-sensitive to the very necessity of rightful change. Seeing that our schools have been alternately pulled and hauled by radical and reactionary, and failing to perceive the slow but certain progress that has taken place, they have wearied of change in educational theory and practice. Impatient of the hasty wrangling and contention, these sigh for a peaceful and fixed

programme in education. As temperament or rearing dictates, they offer one of two modes for its achievement: (1) the return to the educational system of some past century, or (2) the solution of the entire matter once and for all by some council of wise and agreeable experts. Nothing save educational history alone can well reveal the naïve futility of such notions of what is best in education.

An unstable view of education

There are those, too, among us whose error is quite the reverse of these we have just mentioned. They are impressed by the panorama of the decades, by the changing nature of man's economic and spiritual surroundings. They perceive life as ever new, calling for some modern virtue or skill in man, and for a new training which will provide it. Each change in life must be met, and the school must be quick to provide the power. The new necessities dominate; the old and the eternal are forgotten. So the school, disregarding the value of stability, must flit from one purpose to another. It is civic training to-day, moral training to-morrow, and industrial training the day

after. For these, too, educational experience has its message, — the lesson of poise and permanence, — its revelation of the abiding powers in men and the continuing necessities in all ages.

A preliminary historical interpretation

It would be impossible to offer in a small volume any complete answer to the tendencies of unrest in our educational thought. But it is possible to present a preliminary interpretation of American educational history which will suggest the fundamental nature of many of our present problems. Even the cursory reader of the essay here presented must perceive that ours cannot be a static system of education. Change is the inevitable accompaniment of schools which are the defense and the support of a progressive democratic society. But change need not be whimsical and irrational, the fruit of mere radicalism or mere reaction. A deliberate and thorough consciousness of our educational past with all its lessons for the present and future will reveal the stable relations that exist between the school organization and social conditions.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

In these days when some of our educational workers are doubting the power of educational history to give practical guidance to the teacher, it is a particular pleasure to offer this illuminating historical treatment of the problem of educational reconstruction.

CHANGES IN THE NATURE OF OUR LIFE

I

CHANGES IN THE NATURE OF OUR LIFE

The first half-century of our national life was a period of intense struggle. It was essentially a pioneer period. Conditions everywhere were rural and agricultural. Means of communication were few and difficult. There were many difficulties to be met and overcome, many dangers to be encountered, many privations to be borne, and the pressing demand for food and shelter for family and stock was one that needed to be satisfied before all else. On all sides the life of the people was one of unremitting toil. There were forests to be cut, land to be cleared, swamps to be drained, and the wilderness to be tamed and reduced to civilization. The physical conquest of nature, carried on by the primitive methods of the time, largely absorbed the energies and the earnings of the people. We of to-

day who can call to our aid the labor-saving devices, the inventions, the discoveries, and the accumulated knowledge of a century, can scarcely realize the difficulties which confronted a pioneer people a century ago, or the primitive conditions of their pioneer life.

Experience everywhere was the great teacher. What was demanded on all sides was the man who could meet the exacting conditions of his rude environment and make a living for himself and family. To be able to do was the real test, and both boy and girl were trained to accomplishment. In the dozens of different kinds of work on the farm or in the village home, the boy learned much that to-day he has little chance of learning. He learned to make and repair wagons and harness; to build and repair buildings; to take care of animals; to sow and to reap; to read the signs of the weather; to know the trees, the plants and the animals about his home and their habits; and to know how to act when emergencies arose which called for action. He was educated in the school of experience, and it developed in particular his judgment and his skill in

doing things with his fingers. The girl, too, received an analogous training in the daily duties about the home.

In this early period, almost everything used was made by hand. The factory system had not as yet destroyed domestic industry, and everywhere the home was a workshop as well as a dwelling. Most of the common articles now sold in the stores — clothing, shoes, preserved foods, smoked meats, lard, soap, candles, butter, furniture — were made in the homes. On the farm almost all the common industries of life were practised. Town life did not differ materially from that in the country. Life in the days of our forefathers was indeed intense, and every one found plenty to do as soon as able to work. The different industrial processes, which to children to-day are closed books, not only stood revealed to every youngster, but also called for the initiation of the youngster into the work of manufacture as soon as he was able to put his hand to the task. The conditions of life were largely static. The apprentice system was everywhere in vogue, and experience was the chief means of

education. The provision of food, clothing, and the necessities of existence for the family, with all the steps in the industrial processes which these involved, made heavy demands on the time and the energy of all.

Since this earlier time steam, electricity, and machinery have wrought a tremendous change in our national life. Old occupations and methods are gone. One man with a machine to-day can do the work formerly done by fifty or a hundred men. The people of Massachusetts have a greater productive capacity now than had the entire English-speaking race a century ago. So great have been the changes wrought that agriculture, commerce, and manufacturing have been more profoundly modified during the past hundred years than they had been before since the days of the Crusades. Manners, customs, religious observances, political ideas, and views of life, as well as the ways of living, have been almost equally transformed. Business knowledge, industrial skill, executive capacity and personal efficiency have been emphasized; peace and industrial welfare have been substituted in large

part for the wastefulness of war; and leisure, culture, and education have come to be regarded as the birthrights of all. The human race as a whole has been relieved from the constant and pressing struggle for the necessities of existence, and lifted to a higher plane of material comfort and industrial welfare. An increasing proportion of our population have been freed from the mere drudgery of life and have been permitted to devote themselves to the work of extending culture and advancing the art and the science for the race.

A people with little material wealth at the beginning, the War of the Revolution left us impoverished. It was not until the third decade of our national existence that evidences of prosperity began to be manifest. Up to 1807, the development of our country was almost wholly agricultural. This meant a scattered and an isolated population, with few common ideas, common interests, or common needs. Nearly all of the manufactured articles in use were made in Great Britain. The Embargo of 1807 gave rise to "infant industries," and many of the legislative acts

of the next five years had to do with the granting of charters and privileges to various kinds of manufactories. The War of 1812, the shipping regulations of foreign nations adopted at the close of this and the Napoleonic Wars, and the general westward movement of population all tended to build up manufacturing faster than agriculture.

The period from 1810 to 1850 was a period of great national expansion and great industrial development. The introduction of the steamboat and the railroad, together with the digging of many canals, opened up the possibility of doing business on a scale before unthought of, and led to a great demand for labor-saving machinery of every sort. The inventive genius of our people was called into play, and Yankee ingenuity manifested itself in every direction. After 1825, the threshing machine began to supplant the flail and the roller; after 1826, edge tools began to be made in this country; and shortly after this time the Fairbanks platform scale, the reaper, and the lock-stitch sewing machine were invented.

Since that time, the whole aspect of our life has been changed. The railroad has made communication easy and cheap. It is five hours from Boston to New York now, instead of five days. The telegraph and the submarine cable have annihilated time and space. It no longer takes four weeks to get news from England, or three months from Manila or Hong Kong. The telephone has made us all neighbors, and enables a single person to-day to transact the business formerly done by ten or twelve. The many labor-saving devices enable us greatly to increase our capacity for dispatching work and have largely increased our effectiveness, while they have at the same time freed us and our children from the necessity of doing much of the laborious work which people in earlier times were compelled to do. The necessities of life have been cheapened and made common, and even many of the luxuries of life have been brought within the reach of almost all. We of to-day belong to the world instead of to a county, we have the conveniences of the world at our doors, and we have large amounts of leisure time for service, amusement, or personal im-

provement which used to be demanded by the necessities of mere physical existence.

Our development as a nation has been wonderful. The frontier has been pushed farther and farther to the West, and finally pushed off into the ocean. By 1850, fourteen new states had been added to the original thirteen, and these included every state east of the Mississippi River and all of the first tier of states west of the river except Minnesota. To-day the nation reaches to the Pacific and includes forty-six states, with the last two of our mainland territories standing on the threshold waiting for admission. From a little and an isolated Federation with an uncertain future we have grown into a strong nation and finally into a great world power, and we are situated in the centre of the theatre of action in the future. The problems now before us are more numerous and larger than ever before, and they call for men of large training and capacity.

Our population practically doubled every twenty years between 1790 and 1850, doubled again by 1880, and will double again by 1915. With the rapid development of commerce and

manufacturing, cities developed rapidly after 1825. In 1790, there were but six cities having a population of eight thousand or over, and these represented but 3.4 per cent of the total population; in 1810 there were but 11 such, representing but 4.9 per cent; and as late as 1830 there were but 26 such cities, representing but 6.7 per cent. By 1850, the number of cities of eight thousand inhabitants or over had increased to 85, representing 13.5 per cent of the total population; by 1870, to 226, representing 20.9 per cent; by 1890, to 447, representing 29.2 per cent; and by 1900, to 545, representing 33.1 per cent. In 1900, there were 38 cities having a population of 100,000 or over, while 40.2 per cent of the entire population were classified as living in cities of 2500 inhabitants or over.

The growth of the city with us has been rapid indeed. The country resident and the immigrant have both been attracted to it in large numbers. The opportunities for trade and industry which the cities present have drawn many to them who have found great difficulty in adjusting themselves to the new and peculiar life. They have

drawn to them the most energetic and capable, as well as the most vicious and corrupt. The modern city is essentially a centre of trade and industry, and home life and home conditions are determined and conditioned by this fact. The increasing specialization in all fields of labor has divided the people into dozens of more or less clearly defined classes, and the increasing centralization of trade and industry has concentrated business in the hands of a relatively small number. The small merchant and employer are fast giving place to large mercantile and industrial concerns. No longer can a man save up a thousand dollars and start in business for himself with much chance of success. The employee tends to remain an employee; the wage earner tends to remain a wage earner. New discoveries and improved machinery have greatly increased the complexity of the industrial process in all lines of work, and the worker tends more and more to become a cog in the machine and to lose sight of his place and part in the industrial process.

The character of our people, too, has greatly changed. In the earlier period the people of dif-

ferent regions were very homogeneous, and the commercial and intellectual independence of each community and the difficulty of intercommunication tended to keep them so. The early people were largely of English stock. Their ancestors had brought with them many English customs and observances, English ways of thinking, and the English attitude toward religion and law. Though much changed and weakened since this early time, these English traditions have never ceased to influence the character of our national life. Where the people were not English in origin, as in parts of Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New York, the English language gradually supplanted the foreign tongue, English ways were in part adopted, and gradually the greater part of these people were assimilated as a part of our English-speaking and English-thinking nation.

In 1820, our government began for the first time to keep a record of aliens arriving in this country. The number was small at first, but in 1842 it reached 100,000, and since 1845 there have been but two years, both of them during

our Civil War, when the arrivals have been less than this number. Between 1905 and 1908, more than 1,000,000 arrived each year, and the total immigration since 1820 exceeds 27,500,000.

The first to come in any great numbers were the Irish, driven out of Ireland by the potato famine of 1846, and by the oppressive system of landlordism which prevailed. Between 1845 and 1855, a million and a quarter of poor, illiterate Irish immigrants landed on our shores, settling chiefly in the North Atlantic States. Again in 1882, following another famine, Irish immigration reached another high point, and in all over four millions of Irish have come to us since 1820. These people were very poor and uneducated. Less than one half of those who came in the early migration, and scarcely one fourth of those who came later, could read and write.

From 1848 to 1852, and again from 1859 to 1882, our country received great numbers of Germans, a total of about five and one quarter millions of Germans having come since 1820. Unlike the Irish who came earlier, the Germans were a picked and an educated class, the earlier

ones having left Germany because of political and religious oppression, and the later ones to escape forced military service or economic depression. They brought with them their liberalism in politics and religion, and for a time formed a segregated intellectual aristocracy in the Eastern and interior cities of the country.

During the middle years of the nineteenth century, large numbers of English came, in all a total of about three and one-half millions having arrived since 1820. Still later, large numbers of Scandinavians arrived, these going largely to the agricultural sections of the Northwest. In all, nearly two millions of Scandinavians have come to our shores.

While these people frequently settled in groups and retained for a time their foreign language, manners, and customs, they were nevertheless relatively easy to assimilate. All except the Irish came from countries where general education prevailed, and where progressive methods of agriculture, trade, and manufacturing had begun to supersede primitive methods. All were from race stock not very different from our own, and

all possessed courage, initiative, intelligence, adaptability and self-reliance to a large degree. The willingness, good nature, and executive qualities of the Irish, the intellectual thoroughness of the German, the respect for law and order of the English, and the thrift of the Scandinavian have been good additions to our life.

About 1882, the character of our immigration changed in a very remarkable manner. Immigration from the north of Europe dropped off rather abruptly, and in its place immigration from the south and east of Europe set in and soon developed into a great stream. After 1880, southern Italians and Sicilians; people from all parts of that medley of races known as the Austro-Hungarian Empire, — Czechs, Moravians, Slovaks, Poles, Jews, Ruthenians, Croatians, Servians, Dalmatians, Slovenians, Magyars, Roumanians, Austrians; and Slavs, Poles, and Jews from Russia began to come in great numbers. After 1900, Finns from the north, driven out by Russian persecution; and Greeks, Syrians, and Armenians from the south, have come in great numbers to our shores.

These southern and eastern Europeans are of a very different type from the north Europeans who preceded them. Illiterate, docile, lacking in self-reliance and initiative, and not possessing the Anglo-Teutonic conceptions of law, order, and government, their coming has served to dilute tremendously our national stock, and to corrupt our civic life. The great bulk of these people have settled in the cities of the North Atlantic and North Central states, and the problems of proper housing and living, moral and sanitary conditions, honest and decent government, and proper education have everywhere been made more difficult by their presence. Everywhere these people tend to settle in groups or settlements, and to set up here their national manners, customs, and observances. Our task is to break up these groups or settlements, to assimilate and amalgamate these people as a part of our American race, and to implant in their children, so far as can be done, the Anglo-Saxon conception of righteousness, law and order, and popular government, and to awaken in them a reverence for our democratic institutions and for

those things in our national life which we as a people hold to be of abiding worth.

As an accompaniment of these changes in our mode of life and the nature of our population, there has ensued a general weakening of the old social customs and traditions which exercised so strong an educative influence during the early years of our national life. Nearly all of our early people were people of deep religious convictions. The church was a potent factor in their lives and exercised a much stronger influence than it does to-day. The minister was everywhere respected and looked up to by both parents and children. The young were trained to go to Sunday school and to church, and Sunday was observed as a day of rest and religious observances. A religious sanction for acts of conduct was often set forth. The numbers of opportunities to do wrong and to go wrong were much smaller than they are to-day. Communities were small and homogeneous, and every one's actions were every one's business. The community code of conduct and community sentiment were strong restraining and educative forces. The positive convic-

tions of the older members of the community served to check the tendencies toward waywardness of both boys and girls. The home, too, exercised a much stronger restraining and directive influence over the children than is generally the case to-day. Children were taught obedience, proper demeanor, respect, courtesy, honesty, fidelity, and virtue. The master was required by law to look carefully after the manners and the morals of his apprentice as well as to teach him a trade.

All of this was highly educative, along certain lines, to both the boy and the girl, served to keep many in the path of rectitude, and trained them for an honest and a respectable life. In many of our smaller and older communities these conditions persist, to a certain degree, though of necessity much modified by the conditions of modern life; but in the cities, towns, and the newer portions of the country these old educative influences and traditions have largely broken down, or have entirely ceased to exist. The church has lost its influence over the young, frequently they give it only a nominal allegiance, and many children

grow up to-day without any religious training. The little homogeneous community with its limited outlook and its clannish spirit is fast being displaced by semi-urban conditions, a much more cosmopolitan population, and a much freer and an easier life. The apprentice system has practically gone. The amusements and temptations of life have been greatly multiplied. The attitude of the people toward the old problems has greatly changed. Parents everywhere are less strict than they used to be, and the attitude of many communities to-day, as expressed in their life, their newspapers, and their failure to enforce law, is really opposed to righteousness and good behavior. The home altogether too often is unintelligent or neglectful in the handling of children, and not infrequently it has abdicated entirely and has turned over to the public school the whole matter of the training and education of the young.

Along with these changes there has come not only a tremendous increase in the quantity of our knowledge, but also a demand for a large increase in the amount of knowledge necessary to enable one to meet the changed conditions of our

modern life. The kind of knowledge needed, too, has fundamentally changed. The ability to read and write and cipher no longer distinguishes the educated from the uneducated man. A man must have better, broader, and a different kind of knowledge than did his parents if he is to succeed under modern conditions. Success is higher up the ladder now than it was a generation ago, while the crowd about the bottom of the ladder increases every year. Science has been freed and made the common possession of all, and its wonders have become so common that discoveries and inventions have almost ceased to awaken a feeling of wonder. Books, magazines, and newspapers bring knowledge of the latest discoveries, inventions, and improvements, as well as the world's doings, to our doors. With the advent of factory life, the home has ceased to be a workshop; and in our cities it has come to be little more than a sleeping and eating apartment. Factory life has also made it undesirable that children should labor. The result is that a boy or girl in our modern life has so little real home life, so much unprofitable leisure, and ac-

quires so much through the eyes and the ears and learns so little by actual doing, that the problem of providing a proper environment and of utilizing this excess leisure time in profitable training has become one of the most serious as well as one of the most difficult problems now before us. The school, begun at first as a means of imparting to children the common rudiments of learning, has gradually been transformed into one of the most important institutions of democracy and has been called upon to offer some practicable solution of the situation created. This has caused us to look at education in a new and a larger light.

The effect of all these changes in our mode of living is written large on our national life. The industrial and social revolution which we have experienced has been far-reaching in its consequences, and the "good old times" of our grandfathers are gone, never to return. In their place, we have a new and a vastly more complex civilization, with a great and an ever increasing specialization of human effort, and new and ever more difficult social and industrial problems

awaiting solution. The specialization of labor and effort has been applied to all fields of work. We have been made dependent even for the necessities of life upon the commerce of remote regions and distant peoples to an extent that it is difficult for us to understand. The world has become very much smaller than it used to be, and its parts have become interdependent to an extent never known before.

CHANGES IN THE CONCEPTION OF THE SCHOOL

II

CHANGES IN THE CONCEPTION OF THE SCHOOL

The early colonial school of New England was a semi-private and a semi-religious institution. Its curriculum was limited to reading, writing, ciphering, and religion. Writing, being a more difficult art, was frequently taught by a special teacher. Education was insisted on chiefly for religious reasons. Salvation being deemed an individual matter, and the Bible indicating the way, it was very desirable that every one should be able to read it for himself. Family instruction was a common practice, though dames and itinerant schoolmasters eked out a precarious living by giving instruction. The division of labor had not as yet been applied to education to any extent. Teaching was still in the household stage as an industry. The chief educational interest of

the colonies, aside from the desire that all should be able to read the Holy Word, lay in grammar school and collegiate training, that a supply of properly trained ministers might be insured. There was no direct connection between these higher schools and elementary instruction. It was essentially a period of middle-class education, and along the lines of English traditions. These conditions continued until well on into the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

This early period was one in which the need of general or extensive education was relatively small. The education most useful was the education of common experience. Everywhere the right to vote and to hold office was restricted. The possession of a certain number of acres of land, of an estate of a certain value, or of an annual income of a certain amount was necessary to vote, while to hold office still more rigid property qualifications were required. In a number of states there were religious restrictions as well, and in a few taxes were collected for the support of the established churches. There was little need for much education to meet the simple and un-

differentiated conditions of this early period, and little opportunity existed for obtaining it. The ability to read, to write, and to cipher distinguished the educated from the uneducated man, while the amount of general knowledge possessed by even the better educated would seem to us relatively small.

During the early decades of the nineteenth century, schools and the means of education made little progress. There were among the founders of our states certain far-seeing men who wished for general public education, but it was well along toward the middle of the century before these men represented more than a hopeful minority in most of our states, and in the South little was done until after the Civil War. Even in Massachusetts, pioneer as this state has been in so much that has been good, the revival of interest in education dates from the establishment of the State Board of Education and the appointment of Horace Mann as its Secretary in 1837. Popular education was the dream of the reformer rather than the conviction of the people, and popular and free education at public expense

was still further removed from the realms of the necessary or the possible.

Few of the problems of democracy which we are trying so hard to solve to-day by means of public education had as yet presented themselves for solution, and the need of a general system of tax-supported schools was evident to but a few. To be illiterate was no reproach, and it was possible to follow many pursuits successfully without having received any other education than the education of daily work and experience. A large proportion of the people felt that those who desired an education should pay for it. As the Rhode Island farmer expressed it to Henry Barnard in 1844, it would be as sensible to propose to take his plough away from him to plough his neighbor's field as to take his money to educate his neighbor's child. Others felt that at most free education should be extended only to the children of the poor, and for the rudiments of learning only. Still others felt that all forms of education would be conducted best if turned over to the various religious and educational societies of the time. A system of public instruction maintained

by general taxation, such as we to-day enjoy, would not only have been declared unnecessary, but would have been stoutly resisted as well. The best schools, and often the only schools, were private schools supported by the tuition fees of those who could afford to use them, and most of these were more or less directly under church control.

Not until after the beginning of the nineteenth century was education regarded at all as a legitimate public function. At the time of the formation of the Federal Constitution, education was not considered of sufficient importance to receive mention in the document; and so far as there is any recorded mention of the subject in the debates of the constitutional convention, it refers to a national university and not to public education. The reasons for this are easy to see. Education was then a luxury and not a necessity. For centuries it had been the possession of the gentleman and not of the common man. The decentralized district system of administration and the theory of individual and community rights reigned supreme. The provision of schools was

entirely a local and an optional matter. The industrial movement awakened by the Embargo of 1807 and the War of 1812 had not as yet resulted in the substitution of the factory system for domestic industry and in the specialization of labor. The development of new means of intercommunication had not as yet come to break up the homogeneity and independence of the villages. The development of manufacturing centres and labor organizations had not as yet begun to exert their influence. The different humanitarian movements which arose after 1820, and which, among other things, demanded public tax-supported schools for all, had not as yet made themselves felt. The people were poor, and indifferent as to education.

Gradually, and only after great effort, this condition of apathy and indifference was changed to one of active interest, though the change took place but slowly, and differed in point of time in different parts of the country. The Lancastrian system of monitorial instruction (by which a single teacher with the assistance of his best students, called monitors, taught hundreds of

pupils), introduced into this country from England about 1806, for the first time made an elementary school training for all seem possible, from a financial point of view. The first schools in a number of Eastern cities were Lancastrian schools, and the introduction of this system tremendously stimulated the movement for general education. The "charity-school" conception of education, by which free tuition was to be provided only for the children of the deserving poor, and which also came over from England at a slightly earlier date, was after a time eliminated as a conception dangerous to the future of our free institutions.

The idea that free education was a right, and that universal education was a necessity, began to be urged and to find acceptance. The land grants of Congress to the new states for the benefit of common schools greatly stimulated the movement. The published reports of those who had visited Pestalozzi's school in Switzerland, and had examined the new state school system in Prussia, were extensively read. The moral and economic advantages of schools were set forth

at length in resolutions, speeches, pamphlets, magazines, and books.

By 1835, a marked change had taken place in the attitude of society toward many questions. Religious prerequisites for office and taxes for the support of religion had been withdrawn; imprisonment for debt had been abandoned; humanitarian, freedmen, and labor organizations were gaining rapidly in power; and the elective franchise had been widened so as to provide for universal suffrage in almost every state. The unexpected shortcomings which had revealed themselves in legislatures and officials had raised the faith in the common people to a maximum. Elective offices, with short terms, were increased in number. State constitutions were revised so as to limit more narrowly and to define more exactly the powers and duties of those entrusted with office. The need of an educated electorate began to be felt, and the new state constitutions began to instruct the legislatures to provide for common schools, and to create new elective officers to look after the interests of the schools, the school lands, and the school funds.

Just when this change took place cannot be definitely stated. Roughly speaking, it began about 1825 and was accomplished by 1850 in the Northern states. It was a gradual change rather than a sudden one, though rapid advances were at times made. The movement everywhere was greatly stimulated by the educational revival inaugurated by Horace Mann in Massachusetts in 1837. In the Southern states, with one or two exceptions, little was accomplished until after the Civil War and the Reconstruction Period were over. Almost everywhere it took place only after prolonged agitation, and ofttimes only after a bitter struggle. The indifference of legislatures, the unwillingness of taxpayers to assume the burdens of general taxation, the small sense of local responsibility, the satisfaction with existing conditions, the old aristocratic conception of education, the pauper and charity-school idea, and frequently the opposition of denominational and private schools, — all of these had to be met and overcome. The referendum was tried in a number of states, and sometimes more than once; in others, the question of free schools became a vital polit-

ical issue. The work of such men as Horace Mann in Massachusetts, Henry Barnard in Connecticut and Rhode Island, John D. Pierce in Michigan, and Caleb Mills in Indiana stand as conspicuous examples of men who labored against the ignorance and inertia of their times for the establishment of the free public school.

By 1850, the principle of tax-supported schools had been generally accepted in all of the Northern states, and the beginnings of free schools made in some of the Southern states. Six state normal schools had been established, a number of states had provided for State Superintendents of Common Schools and for ex-officio State Boards of Education, and the movement for state control of education had begun. It may be said that it had now become a settled conviction with a majority of the people that the provision of some form of free education was a duty of the state, and that such education contributed in a general way, though just how was not at that time clear, to the moral uplift of the people, to a higher civic virtue, and to increased economic returns to the state. A new conception of free public education

as a birthright of the child on the one hand, and as an exercise of the state's inherent right to self-preservation and improvement on the other, had taken the place of the earlier conception of schools as merely a coöperative effort, based on economy, and for the instruction of youth merely in the rudiments of learning. The large immigration of illiterate Irish and clannish Germans which set in in the late forties gave particular emphasis to this point of view.

Public education was thus for the first time definitely established as a national interest. In the states west of the Alleghany Mountains, the principle of state support was more definitely established, and has been carried further than in the states to the east. General taxation for elementary schools was established, and a state university definitely provided for by all. Almost all of the states subsequently formed to the westward have established general state taxation, and all have provided for a state university for the higher education of their children.

The schools at first provided were of an elementary and a rudimentary nature only. Reading,

writing, spelling, and arithmetic constituted almost the entire curriculum at first. Grammar, geography, and history were added a little later. The term was short, and a small tuition fee, in the form of the "rate-bill," was usually charged to supplement the small income from school funds and from taxation. Those who could not pay the charge were usually admitted as indigents, much as text-books are now supplied to indigents in some of our states. A "fuel tax" was also charged for a time, and admission was denied to those whose parents had not provided their quota of wood. The opportunities for education were small until after the Civil War. It has been estimated by the United States Commissioner of Education that, taking all public and private forms of education and adding them together, each individual in the population on an average received only 82 days of education during his lifetime in 1800, only 208 days in 1840, and only 434 days in 1860. By 1880, the number had reached 792 days; and by 1900, it had reached 998 days. A short winter term, with a subscription school in the spring, was a common pro-

ceeding. School *keeping* was the rule rather than school *teaching*. The method of instruction for a long time was almost entirely individual. Grading of pupils and uniformity in text-books were for a long time unknown. The children studied their lessons and worked their sums, and when these were mastered they went up and recited what they had learned. Those who could work well alone succeeded; the others made only indifferent progress, and soon became discouraged and quit.

Gradually, after the principle of public support had become established in the minds of the people and the method of procedure had been definitely settled in the courts, this condition of affairs was changed, though the change took place at first but slowly. The free-school movement was greatly retarded by the anti-slavery agitation, the Civil War, and the Reconstruction Period. The cities were the first to throw off the "rate-bill" and to provide absolutely free schools. By 1860, it had been abolished in most of the states, and in 1871 the last state, New Jersey, did away with this objectionable provision. Taxes were

slowly increased in amount, and the school term was slowly lengthened. The extension of instruction to include secondary education was a natural outcome, though secondary schools were not established in any numbers until after the Civil War, and almost everywhere the right to do so was fought out in the legislatures, or before the people, and was then unsuccessfully questioned in the courts.

The years immediately following the Civil War were a period of great industrial activity and national development. The cities experienced a very rapid growth; new enterprises were launched in all directions; factories were started for the manufacture of many new kinds of articles; machinery of many new types was introduced; there was renewed activity in railroad building; the West was opened up; immigration from the north of Europe reached a maximum, and that from the south and east of Europe began. The many social and industrial changes which followed made great inroads on the old educational functions of the home, and marked the end of the apprenticeship system as a useful means

of education. Life and industry became dynamic, and methods of procedure and instruction suited to static conditions completely broke down. The overwhelming success of the Prussian armies in the War of 1870 with France called new attention to the importance of public education. "The Prussian schoolmaster has triumphed," was asserted on all sides. The business men of Massachusetts, returning from the London exhibition of 1867, petitioned the legislature to introduce drawing into the public schools of the state. The law of 1868, the importation of a supervisor of drawing from England in 1870, and the establishment of the Boston Normal Art School in 1875 were the results. The exhibit of the Russian government at the Centennial Exhibition of 1876 revealed to us the value of manual training. In the early seventies, the kindergarten idea came to America from Germany, and was soon recognized as a valuable addition. In the eighties, the Herbartian conception of education, with its emphasis on proper psychological procedure and on character-building as the aim of education, began to reshape our educational theory.

CHANGING CONCEPTIONS

During the quarter of a century from 1875 to 1900, the common school experienced a marked change in method and in direction. The old limited curriculum for disciplinary purposes could no longer meet the changed conditions of our national life. The school was asked to concentrate its energy to some more definite purpose, to train the eye and the hand for direct and useful action, and to prepare more definitely its pupils for personal usefulness in life. Drawing, manual-training, domestic science, laboratory instruction, and the kindergarten began to demand recognition in the course of study. Music was advocated for its cultural and inspirational value, and elementary science — nature study — began to crowd arithmetic and grammar on the basis of practical usefulness in life. Old conservative schoolmasters, unaware of the changed conditions and the new problems before us, spoke sneeringly of these new "fads and frills," but despite such opposition the school has been compelled to admit and to make a place for these new subjects, and to direct its energies toward a new and a higher purpose. In all this, the cities have been

the leaders, while the country school has done little or nothing to adapt itself to the changed conditions of our life. The process is as yet by no means completed. There are many communities and some normal schools which as yet have not been touched by the modern spirit in education. Sooner or later, though, these slow and conservative communities and schools will be forced to take up their share of the educational burden, and to provide the kind of training which they should.

By 1900, it may be said that our public schools had been transformed from mere teaching institutions, where a disciplinary training in the rudiments of learning was given, and had been called upon to undertake some of the educational functions no longer provided either by the home or in the shop. The industrial capabilities and the character of the child were now to be shaped, some better preparation to meet the changed conditions of life was to be given, and the school was also called upon anew to help assimilate the increasing number and the changing type of aliens coming to our shores. In the cities this

became a serious question, and many additions and concessions had to be made, especially to the Germans, to get their children into our American public schools instead of their alien parochial schools. The period from 1875 to 1900 was a period of discussion and criticism. Practical men took the public school severely to task, and pointed out the shortcomings of the old type of training. The proceedings of the educational associations of the time are filled with discussions as to the need and value of the new subjects, and the desired changes in the nature of the school itself. The school was forced to become conscious of itself, and it became critical of its aims and of its methods of procedure.

The psychology of instruction and discussions as to the relative value of subjects now came to the front. Normal schools for the proper training of teachers, both public and private, began to be founded in numbers. The new subject of "pedagogy," a term expressive of the conception of public education at that time, now began to be grudgingly received into the more democratic of our universities. The influence of the

new doctrine of evolution also began to be apparent, and a conception of the child as a slowly developing personality, demanding subject matter and method suited to his stage of development, now began to take the place of the earlier pouring-in-of-information conception. Child study for a time almost monopolized the educational field. Books on the curriculum, on child life, and on methods of teaching were now published numerously. Character-building was erected as a definite aim in education. Psychology became the guiding science of the school.

In all of these changes of a quarter of a century, the school has gained tremendously in dignity, power, and influence. The old do-as-you-please policy had to be abandoned. Permission was changed to obligation all along the line. Minimum requirements were laid down, and these have been gradually advanced. New and higher requirements for those who are to teach have been instituted. The new subjects of instruction have found a place in the system, and the system itself has been broadened and added to at each end. The democratic American high

school has become a truly national institution. New taxes have been provided, old forms of taxation have been increased, and the school funds have been more carefully guarded. Aid for private, sectarian, and denominational schools has been cut off, and that question forever settled. Bulky school codes have been developed; new constitutions have made very definite provisions for state school systems, and have laid very positive mandates on the legislatures "to provide an efficient system of free public schools" for all the children of the state. School legislation has become an important part of the work of each session of the legislature. The right of the state has been asserted and sustained by the courts. Education for all at public expense has come to be accepted as a settled conviction of our people. The right to compel the child to partake of the advantages offered has also been established, and is now in the process of being generally accepted. So thoroughly have we come to be actuated by a common purpose that we often find ourselves speaking of the American public school, though strictly speaking there is no such

thing. Our school systems are all state school systems, though within recent years they have become truly national in spirit. All of this had been thoroughly established in principle before the end of the last century, but it may take another generation to establish it thoroughly in the schools. Our national development advances faster than our educational practice.

NEW CONCEPTIONS AND PRESENT TENDENCIES

III

NEW CONCEPTIONS AND PRESENT TENDENCIES

THE Spanish-American War of 1898 and the recent Russo-Japanese War served alike to concentrate attention once more on the advantages of general education. It was "the man behind the gun" who won in each case. These wars, and other more or less related events, have served to bring out into new relief our position in the family of nations, and to reveal to us something of the part we shall probably be called upon to play in the world's affairs in the future. Our location, our resources, our capacity, and, not least, the high moral and humanitarian purposes which actuate us as a nation, are certain to make our influence felt in the affairs of the world in the future. We are slowly beginning to see, as well, that the great battles of the world in the future are to be commercial rather than military

or naval, and that it is our duty to get ready for them if we wish to continue to prosper as a nation. The trained artisan is to be the private; the trained leader the captain; and an educated, sober, capable, and industrious people the base of supplies for the national armies of the future. Whether we like it or not, we are beginning to see that we are pitted against the world in a gigantic battle of brains and skill, with the markets of the world, work for our people, and internal peace and contentment as the prizes at stake.

From 1897 to 1907, our country experienced an unprecedented period of industrial development and national prosperity. It was a period marked by the concentration of capital and business enterprises in all fields; undertakings on a scale heretofore unattempted were begun; capital changed from a national to an international basis; "trusts," combinations, and associations were formed in all lines of business; the specialization of labor and the introduction of labor-saving machinery took place to an extent before unknown; new inventions destroyed old trades

and threw hundreds out of employment; the immigration of people racially further removed from our own stock reached a maximum; city conditions everywhere became even more complex and potentially more dangerous; villages became more urban, and a more cosmopolitan attitude began to pervade our whole life; the frontier practically disappeared; the national feeling was deepened and intensified, and the national government was called upon to do many things for the benefit of the people which it had become clearly evident that the states could not do.

Such periods of rapid development subject educational systems to increased strain. National progress outruns the possibility of education to keep pace with it. Many readjustments are called for, and readjustments are not easy to make, and cannot be made at once. The need of broad, general, and diversified training, adapted to the needs of the future rather than to the needs of the present or the past, becomes even more evident. The educational system is subjected to new and increased criticism. We hear this on all sides to-day. The practical man would make the school

over; the conservative schoolmaster clings tenaciously to the past. Criticism and skepticism alike prevail. At last the tension becomes so great that something has to give way, and progress, often rapid progress, ensues. A new view-point is attained, a new inspiration directs our work, new means and methods are introduced, and often a new philosophy actuates the work of the school.

There are many reasons for thinking that our school system has entered on another such period of change and development now, and that we are standing on the threshold of a new era in educational progress. The period since 1900 has certainly been a remarkable one. The number of new educational societies and associations which have been formed, and the number of congresses which have been held to promote some one phase or another of educational work, is so large that one can scarcely remember their names. The great educational awakening which has taken place in the Southern states is only paralleled by that started by Horace Mann in Massachusetts seventy years ago. The large endowments for higher education, and the deep interest taken in popular

education by many laymen, are certainly significant. The many state educational commissions which have been created within the past five years indicate a general dissatisfaction with existing conditions and a desire for change and improvement. The new interest in school hygiene and the physical welfare of the child indicates a new and a commendable desire to care for the bodies as well as the heads of our children. The great educational lessons to be learned from a study of the educational, political, and industrial progress of the German Empire during the past forty years are at last beginning to take root with us. Above all, the new and extensive interest in industrial and vocational training is especially significant of the changing conception of the function of the school and the classes in society which the school is in future expected to serve.

A right-about-face movement, too, is taking place in our educational theory. When the school first became conscious and critical of itself it turned to methods and class-room procedure for lines of improvement, and psychology became its fundamental science. Its gaze was turned inward

upon itself. Many reforms and improvements in methods and in the teaching process were made, but the advances in organization and in the enrichment of the curriculum have nearly all been forced upon the school by practical men from without. The school now shows signs of becoming conscious of itself in a new and a truer direction; its gaze is now outward instead of inward, and the relation of the school to the world outside has now become a question of the first importance in educational procedure. The school is essentially a time and labor saving device, created — with us — by democracy to serve democracy's needs. To convey to the next generation the knowledge and the accumulated experience of the past is not its only function. It must equally prepare the future citizen for the to-morrow of our complex life. The school must grasp the significance of its social connections and relations, and must come to realize that its real worth and its hope of adequate reward lies in its social efficiency. There are many reasons for believing that this change is taking place rapidly at present, and that an educational sociology, needed as much by teachers to-

day as an educational psychology, is now in the process of being formulated for our use.

Child life is everywhere experiencing to-day a new lengthening of the period of dependence and training. In proportion as our social life becomes broader and more complex, a longer period of guidance becomes necessary to prepare the individual for active participation in it. As our industrial life becomes narrower and its processes more concealed, new and more extended training is called for to prepare the future worker for his task, to reveal to him something of the intricacy and interdependence of our modern, social, and industrial life, and to point out to him the necessity of each man's part. With the ever increasing subdivision and specialization of labor, the danger from class subdivision is constantly increasing, and the task is thrown more and more upon the school of instilling into all a social and a political consciousness that will lead to unity amid diversity, and to united action for the preservation and betterment of our democratic institutions. The great numbers of aliens who yearly come to our shores and at once become a part of our

industrial classes, many of whom are illiterate and few of whom have any real conception of the meaning of democratic life, add new emphasis to this point of view. Five or six months of common school education each year for a few years are no longer enough, and on all sides the school year is being lengthened and the educational requirements increased. So marked has been the change in this direction within recent years, that sixteen years of age bids fair to be the earliest time at which we will, ultimately, permit children to entirely cease attendance at some form of the public school.

Our school curriculum bids fair, too, to experience many modifications during the next one or two decades, and chiefly along a line that will lead toward preparation for increased social efficiency. Much antiquated material, adapted largely to the needs of a society that has preceded us, will doubtless be eliminated. New subjects and new points of emphasis in old subjects, better adapting the school to our changed and changing social and industrial life, will probably be added. Our city schools will soon be forced to give up

the exceedingly democratic idea that all are equal, and that our society is devoid of classes, as a few cities have already in large part done, and to begin a specialization of educational effort along many new lines in an attempt better to adapt the school to the needs of these many classes in the city life. City, town, and country schools alike have, in the past, directed most of their training to satisfying the needs of the children of the well-to-do classes, and those headed for business life or the professions. More recently, most of the larger cities have provided some form of work leading to preparation for the executive positions in technical pursuits. The common wage earners, those who enter the industries as workmen, and the country boy and girl have been forced to take what was provided for the others, or to do without.

The situation has been somewhat analogous to that of the old colleges, with their Latin, Greek, and Mathematics curriculum and their small student body and limited support. With the introduction of many new lines of work and the democratization of all instruction, the colleges have

experienced a great increase in students and in popular favor and support. Our public schools are at present experiencing some such change, and it is one that is likely to increase rather than to diminish with time. Vocational schools and special type schools of many kinds are likely soon to find a place in our more important school systems. There is some reason to hope, too, that the aim and direction of the country school and the small town school will also change, and that in the future these will seriously turn their attention to the needs of rural life. Ever since the establishment of rural schools they have been giving instruction of a kind which has led to the city rather than to the farm. The introduction of manual training, domestic science, and agriculture would do much toward making the country school and the small town school a more useful social institution.

A very significant change has also taken place since 1900 in the attitude assumed toward the study of education by our higher institutions of learning. The study of education, rather than the old "pedagogy," has recently become an im-

portant part of the work of most of our colleges and universities. Instead of a study of school methods and management only, the work has changed into a phase of political science, — that of a study of means of improving the state and of advancing the public welfare. Nearly all of our universities and colleges now have such chairs or departments, and the state universities and our more democratic private institutions are now organizing professional schools for the training of teachers and educational leaders for the state. Active, capable, and mature young men are studying the subject, and many are preparing themselves for leadership in the work which will soon have to be done. The work begins at last to offer a good career, and the opportunities for useful service are almost unparalleled. The instruction offered in a number of our normal schools has been revised recently to make it conform better to the new conception, and many indications point to education as a future high school subject of study, with ultimately a unit of credit for college entrance. Surely a study of the history, aims, purposes, and functions of public

education in a democratic society such as our own ought to be as useful, either as a preparation for participation in active life, or for the thinking required of a college Freshman, as is the study of the History of Mediæval Europe, or the reading of four books of Cæsar.

The administration of education each year becomes a more important and a more dignified piece of work. If we could only cast off the antiquated and unsatisfactory method of awarding the selection of state and county superintendents to the Republican and Democratic parties, and open up these places to the competition of the brains of the whole country, as we have done with the high school principalship and the city superintendency, these positions would become among the most important within the gift of the state. The office of superintendent of city schools has in many places become one of much dignity and importance, and the office is being completely divorced from partisan or personal politics by all progressive communities. State Superintendents of Public Instruction and State Boards of Education are being entrusted with new functions,

and a marked tendency toward a centralization of power and responsibility is manifest in many states. There is even good reason to believe that at last Congress has been touched by the new spirit in education, and that it will, before long, perform the long-delayed task of raising the national Bureau of Education from a position inferior to that of the life-saving service, the bureau of fish and fisheries, or the meat-inspection service, to a position commensurate with the importance of education to us as a nation.

A people who express themselves as completely as we do in free political institutions, and whose whole life is experiencing such rapid changes and advances as our own, is increasingly dependent on education for guidance and progress. As a nation we have been slow to realize this. We have cared for higher or university education relatively well, and our secondary schools are in many places well provided for, but our elementary, supplementary, continuation, and vocational schools have been as yet but imperfectly developed. The recent German commission sent to this country to investigate our educational

conditions mentioned this as one of our most vulnerable points.

The new period of advance which we now seem to be entering also bids fair to be very paternalistic, perhaps even socialistic, in the matter of education. The old principle, fought for so vigorously fifty or sixty years ago, that the wealth of the state must educate the children of the state, bids fair to be even further extended with a view to a greater equalization of both the burdens and the advantages of education. Poor and overburdened towns and districts will be supplied with sufficient means to enable them to provide a good school for their children, and the present great difference in tax rates, to provide practically the same educational advantages, will be in large part equalized by the state. There is, as yet, a small but a very significant tendency for the school to free itself from the financial control of the town board or city council, and to erect itself as an independent and a coördinate branch of the town or city government, responsible only to the people for its work and its expense. There are many signs of an increasing centralization of

management which will ultimately lead to greater efficiency. Many options which communities have to-day will in time be changed into obligations. The state oversight of private and parochial education is likely to increase slowly, especially along the lines of uniformity in statistics and records, sanitary inspection, common standards of work, and the enforcement of the attendance laws. In particular, the attitude toward the control of the child is likely to change. Each year the child is coming to belong more and more to the state, and less and less to the parent. In all that relates to proper care, kindness, education, and advantages, the child belongs to the parent; but when neglect, abuse, and the deprivation of the child of any natural right takes place, the child belongs to the state. The right to reasonably good treatment, proper care, an education, protection from vice, and protection from labor beyond his strength and years, the state will soon guarantee. The plea in defense that "the child is my child" will not be accepted much longer by society. Our future welfare is too thoroughly in the keeping of the child to permit of such a policy.

The movement for general education for all of the people has been essentially a democratic movement. Everywhere west of the Alleghany Mountains the girl has shared equally with the boy in all of the advantages provided. The masses, who have been the voting strength of the movement, have seen in it a chance for their children to rise, and educators and statesmen have seen in it the safety of the republic. School systems with us are thoroughly democratic. An educational ladder for all who can afford it and have the mental capacity to use it extends from the kindergarten or primary school to and through the state university. Only in the states of the North Atlantic group, Maine alone excepted, has there been a failure to carry the system to its logical conclusion at the top.

The evils and shortcomings of democracy are many and call loudly for remedies and improvement. Whether we shall have remedies and improvement or not depends very largely on how the next generation is trained. The ideas taught in the school to-day become the actuating principles of democracy to-morrow. Because the school

is so thoroughly a democratic institution and responds so quickly to democratic sentiment, the school has for long hesitated to touch, except in a very cautious manner, many of the evils and shortcomings of democracy. The greatest obstacle to intelligent educational and social progress is the lack of intelligence and grasp of democracy itself. It takes time and patience to educate and move the mass, yet in some way the school must touch these sores. Our state governments are weak and inefficient, we say ; the school must then teach, and teach in some effective manner, the principles of strong and effective government. Our city governments are corrupt, we hear; fundamental moral and economic principles must then be taught to the masses, so that they may realize the importance of civic righteousness, and understand as well who ultimately pays the bills for all mismanagement. Our people waste their money and their leisure in idle and profligate ways, we say ; a knowledge of values and of how to utilize leisure time must then be taught. The list might be prolonged over pages, with similar conclusions. Through all the complicated machinery of the

school, some way must be found to awaken a social consciousness as opposed to class consciousness, to bring out the important social and civic lessons, to point out our social and civic needs, and to teach our young people how to live better and to make better use of their leisure time. Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Grammar, Geography, and History, the staples of the elementary curriculum, are really of little value except as they are closely related with the needs and problems of our social, civic, and industrial life.

This new conception shifts the emphasis in education from methods to men, and this new conception has underlain many of the better courses of study issued for our schools during recent years. It also underlies much of the discussion of the present time. Teachers as a body, though, are not thoroughly conscious of such a purpose or need, and courses of study alone cannot produce results. If our schools are to become more effective social institutions, our teachers must become more effective social workers. What teachers need, as much as anything else, is a knowledge of democracy's needs and problems, and of

conditions to be met. Our teaching force is composed largely of women, and women are seldom interested by nature in this point of view. Their training for generations has been along different lines. Those teachers who enter the work wholly by examination have little opportunity ever to acquire this point of view, and the examination door should be closed as soon as financial conditions will permit. The time to impart ideals is during the training period, and an introduction to the social point of view and the social and industrial problems before us as a nation ought to be an essential part of the training of every normal school. A normal school which is essentially an apprentice school will inevitably turn out teachers with limited vision and little power of growth, while the call to-day for far-sighted teachers of large adaptability is greater than ever before in our history.

The work of public education is destined in the near future to be one of the most important lines of work which our republic has to do. Its importance in a government such as ours can scarcely be overestimated. Each man with us is the captain of his own fate and the carver of

his own destiny. It is within his power to do great good or to do great harm. To decide righteously and to act wisely he must know. Knowledge and training, if of the right type, can hardly be provided too extensively. The overeducated man is scarcely possible if an education adapted to his needs and station in life is given him. The work of public education is with us, too, to a large degree, a piece of religious work. To engage in it is to enlist in the nation's service. Its call is for those who would dedicate themselves in a noble way. Those who would serve must be of the world, with red blood in their veins; they must know the world, its needs, and its problems; they must have largeness of vision, and the courage to do and to dare; and they must train the youth with whom they come in contact for useful and efficient action.

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